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Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of  
Provision of Access for  
900 Number Service

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RM No. 8535

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

REPLY COMMENTS

MCI Telecommunications Corporation (MCI) hereby provides its reply comments in response to the Commission's Public Notice dated October 25, 1994. Therein, the Commission sought comment on a petition filed by Teleservices Industry Association (TIA) requesting that the Commission initiate a rulemaking proceeding, with a view toward adopting rules and policies to require local exchange carriers to replace the current "NXX" system of screening 900 numbers with a ten-digit database system for screening numbers. The adoption of such rules and policies would cause 900 numbers to be "portable," thus enabling the movement of 900 numbers among interexchange carriers, as 800 numbers are moved today.

In its initial comments, MCI indicated that, although it disagreed with several of the underlying premises of the TIA petition, it supported, in principle, 900 portability. MCI has long been an advocate of policies which give choice to consumers concerning their selection of services. In both the short and long terms, these policies serve the public interest.

The Commission has long recognized the importance of number portability in promoting consumer choice. This recognition is reflected in the rules and procedures the Commission adopted to

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make number portability a reality in the 800 transport market.<sup>1</sup> In the context of 800 service, it said that "[w]e believe that the public interest will be best served by affording users the widest possible choice...."<sup>2</sup> The Commission should continue to sustain such sound themes throughout its decisions regarding matters of number portability.

With respect to comments by several Bell Operating Companies (BOCs) that significant difficulties would exist in transferring technology used for 800 portability to achieve 900 portability,<sup>3</sup> parties making such claims have relied on little or no evidence to support their claims. For instance, US West admits that it has not even contacted vendors to determine whether it is technically feasible to modify the current system employing 800 data base technology to accommodate another service using another Service Access Code.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, since BOCs chose to design the current network in such a way as to foreclose portability, the Commission should not now accept the argument -- that the

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<sup>1</sup> See Competition in the Long Distance Market, 6 FCC Rcd. 5880, 5904 (1991), recon. 6 FCC Rcd. 569 (1991), further recon. 7 FCC Rcd. 2677 (1992). See also, Letter of May 3, 1994 from Richard Metzger, Jr., Chief, Common Carrier Bureau, to Ronald Conners, Director of NANP Administration, wherein the Commission stated, in the context of 500 number portability, that "it continue[s] to believe that number portability should be achieved as expeditiously as possible."

<sup>2</sup> CC Docket No. 86-10, Order, In the Matter of Provision of Access for 800 Service, released February 10, 1993., at 14.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g., the comments of BellSouth at 3, Southwestern Bell at 2, Pacific Bell at 2-3, and US West at 2.

<sup>4</sup> Comments of US West at 4.

network cannot be readily modified -- as justification not to implement 900 portability.

MCI believes that much of the technology used to achieve 800 portability could be used to implement 900 portability. Certainly, the intelligence now exists to permit 10-digit screening. The release of AIN 0.1 allows for additional nonswitched-based service development.

MCI further believes that, with the advent of Advanced Intelligent Network or AIN technology, the transition to 900 portability can be facilitated. Elsewhere, the local exchange companies have indicated that robust, widespread use of AIN technology is imminent. BellSouth projected that 70% of its access lines would have AIN capabilities by January 1, 1995;<sup>5</sup> US West stated that AIN will be available in its territory early in 1995;<sup>6</sup> Southwestern Bell listed AIN as one of its available

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<sup>5</sup> See DA 94-893, Bell South's Petition for Waiver, In the Matter of Petition of BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. for Waiver of Part 69 of the Commission's Rules to Provide 500 Access Service, filed August 12, 1994, at 3. Despite this assertion, BellSouth claims in this docket that "[i]t is unlikely that BellSouth could offer 900 number portability using an AIN solution before 1998...." Comments of BellSouth at 3.

<sup>6</sup> See DA 94-893, US West's Reply to Petition to Reject, Opposition, and Comments, In the Matter of Petition of US West Communications for Waiver of Part 69 of the Commission's Rules to Provide 500 Access Service, filed September 9, 1994, at 6. In its initial comments, US West also indicates it is "examining use of AIN to support number portability when exhaust of 800 numbers requires the opening of a new SAC." Footnote 5, Comments of US West at 3.

technologies;<sup>7</sup> NYNEX said that it plans to provide 500 Access Service using the AIN;<sup>8</sup> and Ameritech showed that it may use an AIN/database arrangement to provide 500 service when it becomes economically justified.<sup>9</sup> With the potentially widespread use of AIN technology in the near term, not only does it appear that, with modification, the appropriate technology to implement 900 portability exists, but that existing investments in AIN technology could minimize the costs of implementing 900 portability.

Several BOCs claim that costs to implement 900 portability would be high.<sup>10</sup> Such assertions are not supported. As the Commission is aware, in its proceeding on 800 service, cost information initially submitted by BOCs was accompanied with

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<sup>7</sup> See Southwestern Bell Ex Parte, re: DA 94-893, SWBT Petition for Waiver of Access Charge Rules to Provide 500 Access Service, filed August 31, 1994.

<sup>8</sup> See NYNEX Reply Comments, DA 94-952, In the Matter of NYNEX Petition for Waiver of Part 69 of Commission's Rules to Offer 500 Access Service, filed September 21, 1994, at 3.

<sup>9</sup> See DA 94-893, Ameritech's Reply Comments, In the Matter of Petitions for Waiver of the Federal Communications Commission's Rules to Provide 500 Access Service, filed September 9, 1994, at 3. Additionally, Bell Atlantic and Southern New England Telephone stated that they will offer 500 Access via database technology. See Bell Atlantic Petition for Expedited Waiver of Part 69 Rules, In the Matter of the Bell Atlantic Telephone Companies, Waiver of Section 69.4(b) of the Commission's Rules to Offer 500 Access Service, filed August 10, 1994, at 2. Also, See Petition for Expedited Waiver of Part 69 Rules, In the Matter of The Southern New England Telephone Company, Waiver of Section 69.4(b) of the Commission's Rules to Offer 500 Access Service, filed September 28, 1994, at 2.

<sup>10</sup> See the comments of BellSouth at 3, Ameritech at 1, Southwestern Bell at 2, Pacific Bell at 2-3, and US West at 2-4.


little or no supporting information,<sup>11</sup> and the Commission found discrepancies in the information submitted.<sup>12</sup> The Commission found that without a break-down of data into component elements and an explanation of how they were generated, it was not possible to assess the accuracy of cost information.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, in order for the Commission to make an informed decision in this proceeding, it will be necessary for the Commission to require that detailed cost information be provided; and, to ensure the accuracy of this information, the Commission would need to obtain additional cost information from vendors.

In view of the foregoing, the Commission should institute a rulemaking proceeding on 900 portability.

Respectfully submitted,

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December 12, 1994

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<sup>11</sup> See CC Docket No. 86-10, In the Matter of Provision of Access for 800 Service, Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rule Making, released February 18, 1988, at 3.

<sup>12</sup> See CC Docket No. 86-10, In the Matter of Provision of Access for 800 Service, Report and Order, released April 21, 1989, at 3.

<sup>13</sup> CC Docket No. 86-10, In the Matter of Provision of Access for 800 Service, Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rule Making, released February 18, 1988, at 3.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Vernell V. Garey, do hereby certify that on this 12th day of December, 1994, copies of the forgoing "REPLY COMMENTS" in RM No. 8535 were served by first-class U.S. mail, postage paid, upon the parties listed on the attached list.

  
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